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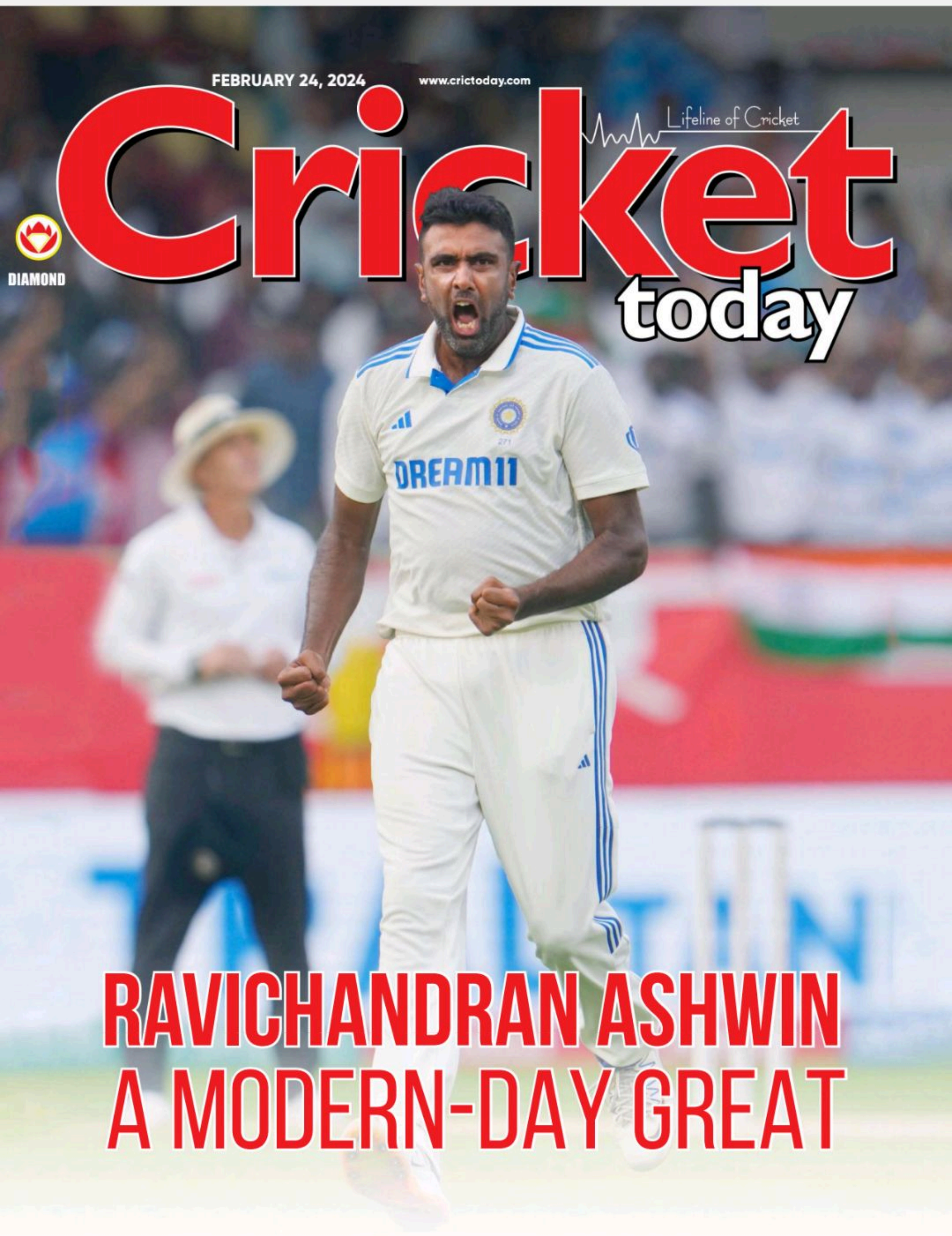

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN
A MODERN-DAY GREAT

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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R Ashwin is the most influential bowler internationally, with new variations in every series. I have seen him making the batters dance on his bowling tunes, and who better than Steve Smith would tell you about the off-spinner's talent. He recently completed 500 Test wickets and joined the league of legendary bowlers, becoming the second Indian bowler after Anil Kumble to reach the milestone. He is one of the finest in the history of Test cricket, and despite being kept on the bench by Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri, his wicket-taking abilities haven't changed a bit. He has been getting a raw deal from the team management over the years, but the champion bowler continues to prove his critics wrong. Comparing Ashwin's record with other spin maestros highlights his exceptional prowess. Nathan Lyon's resilience and consistency must be noticed. Despite playing more matches, Lyon's knack for taking five-wicket hauls across various countries showcases his adaptability and reliability in any cricketing environment. This resilience has been a cornerstone of Lyon's success throughout his career. Moreover, the absence of fifers for Ashwin in SENA conditions may raise questions about his ability to excel in challenging overseas environments. While his dominance in subcontinental pitches is undeniable, critics may argue that true greatness is defined by conquering diverse conditions worldwide. Although comparisons with Nathan Lyon underscore distinct strengths and contexts, Ashwin's indelible mark on cricket remains undeniable. His legacy as a spin maestro will resonate for generations as he continues to captivate audiences with his artistry. Ashwin's journey is not just about numbers but a testament to perseverance, skill, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, ensuring his place in the pantheon of cricketing legends. India has hammered England's Bazball approach in the ongoing five-match Test series, but the visiting team's head coach, Brendon McCullum, has refused to give up on their aggressive brand of cricket. He feels England will continue playing with the same mindset regardless of the result. I think that's the right way to tackle the challenges, as England has invested a lot in Bazballa, and giving up on it after a few failures is not the way to move forward. Before McCullum became coach, England had won one of its previous 17 tests. Since his arrival, England has won 14 of 21 tests — many of those victories in breathtaking fashion. Former England captain Nasser Hussain wrote in the Daily Mail that the team might need to tweak its approach, saying, "Bazball is not attack, attack, attack — occasionally, you must absorb pressure." However, McCullum is unmoved and unfaced. Meanwhile, Lewis Hamilton's move to Ferrari and Kylian Mbappe's exit from PSG to join Real Madrid hogs the limelight. Enjoy the action-packed edition of Cricket Today.

R Ashwin is the most influential bowler internationally, with new variations in every series.

Cricket today

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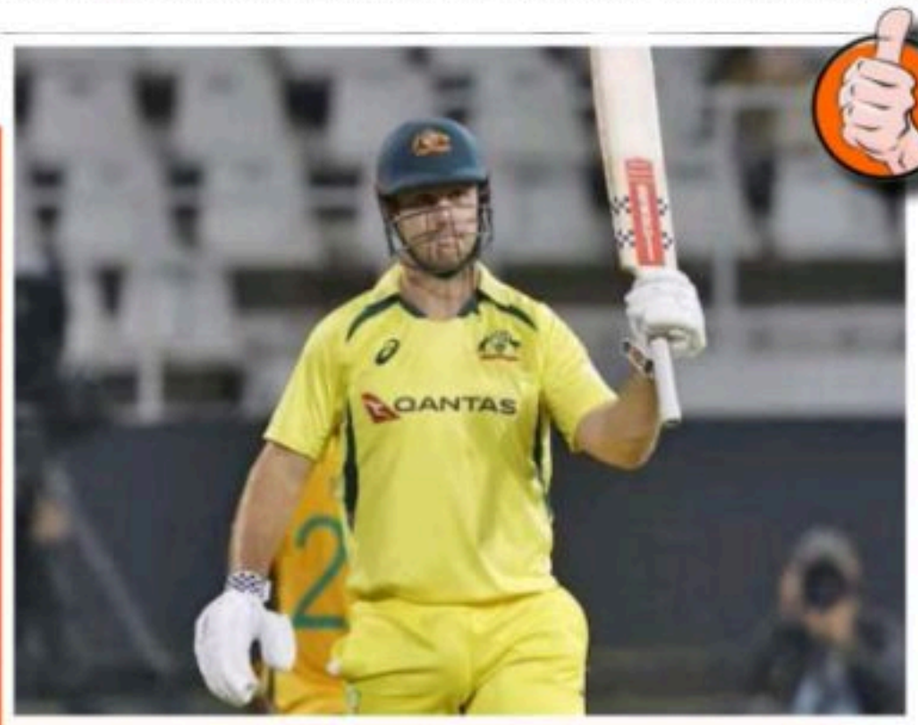
WHAT'S HOT & NOT



MITCHELL MARSH

New Zealand made 215-3 batting first in an innings, which included 13 sixes and 10 fours. Captain Mitchell Marsh piloted Australia's innings with an unbeaten 72 from 44 balls and was man of the match for his role in Australia's third-highest successful run chase. He is likely to lead Australia in the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup.

SHREYAS IYER

The centrally contracted player, Shreyas Iyer, has faked a back injury to opt out of the Ranji Trophy. His lie was busted when the National Cricket Academy declared him fit in a letter written to BCCI. Nitin Patel, the head of sports science and medicine at the National Cricket Academy, has confirmed that Iyer has no fresh injury.

MOHAMMAD AMIR

Mohammad Amir showed plenty of courage to smash two boundaries, with captain Rilee Rossouw scoring an unbeaten 34. Quetta reached 139-7 with 10 balls to spare. Quetta joined Multan Sultans at the top of the leaderboard with six points from three games. Islamabad has lost back-to-back games and has two points.

BEN DUCKETT

During an interview at the end of day three of the Rajkot Test, Duckett praised Yashasvi Jaiswal for his attacking century and suggested that the current England team should receive credit for influencing teams to bat more aggressively in Tests. He has been slammed by former players for his statement.

AKASH DEEP

Bengal pacer Akash Deep is making his Test debut for India in the fourth game of the series. Head coach Rahul Dravid gave him his Test cap. With Jasprit Bumrah rested, Akash will share the fast-bowling responsibilities with Mohammed Sira against England. He has been impressive for Bengal since making his first-class debut in 2019.

JONNY BAIRSTOW

Jonny Bairstow registered a four-ball duck in the first innings of the third Test against India. With the duck, the 34-year-old scripted an unwanted record. He went past Pakistan's Danish Kaneria to register the most ducks in Test cricket against India. It was Bairstow's eighth duck against the Rohit Sharma-led side in red-ball cricket.

THE WEEK THAT WAS

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FASTEST TO 10K: Babar's landmark 271st T20 saw him become the quickest batter to reach 10,000 runs. Chris Gayle of the West Indies held the previous record of getting the 10,000-run milestone in 275 T20 games.

ALL-ROUND CONTRIBUTIONS: Ravindra Jadeja was India's best performer in the 434-run win over England in the third Test. He scored a hundred and took 7 wickets in Rajkot.

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MR CONSISTENT: Yashasvi Jaiswal celebrates his double century on the fourth day of the third cricket test match between England and India. It was his second double century of the series, and the southpaw also surpassed 500 runs.

SENSATIONAL DEBUT: Sarfaraz Khan, given a Test cap by Anil Kumble, celebrated the occasion with two back-to-back fifties in the third Test against England. He stitched meaningful partnerships with Ravindra Jadeja and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

WINNING SMILE: Taylor Fritz poses with his trophy after the final match against Tommy Paul at the Delray Beach Open tennis tournament. Fritz won 6-2, 6-3.

LEGENDARY HUG: Inter Miami co-owner David Beckham hugs forward Luis Suarez before the team's MLS soccer match against Real Salt Lake.

Cricket Buzz

"I've played with this boy before, and he's a very level-headed and down-to-earth guy. I'm really proud of him"

- AB de Villiers on Sarfaraz Khan's Test debut

RISHABH PANT SET TO CAPTAIN DELHI CAPITALS

Delhi Capitals' co-owner Parth Jindal confirmed that Rishabh Pant will be the captain in the IPL 2024 but will not perform the wicket-keeping duties for the tournament's first half. Parth revealed that Pant has started to practice as a wicketkeeper and is also engaging in the batting and running sessions. "Rishabh Pant has no problem in batting and running. He is performing wicket-keeping drills and is fully fit for IPL. I expect Pant to play the full league and lead the side. He will not be given wicket-keeping gloves for the first seven games," Jindal said while speaking to ESPN Cricinfo.

"I think the record of winning the most World Cups for India should be in my name"

- Smriti Mandhana on her goal

MS DHONI'S POTENTIAL RETIREMENT

Former Indian wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel recently shed light on CSK skipper MS Dhoni's potential retirement from the Indian Premier League (IPL). MS Dhoni planned to retire last season in 2023, but the legendary skipper declared that he would return for another season due to the overwhelming reception from his loyal fans. There has been a lot of chatter about whether it will be MS Dhoni's last season. Patel believes the talks about Dhoni's retirement from the tournament will only stretch until he addresses them himself. "Playing only once every ten months, we repeatedly discuss whether these two months could be Dhoni's final stretch in cricket. The answer to this question lies solely with him," Patel said on JioCinema.

JAISWAL BUYS INR 5.4 CRORE APARTMENT

Indian cricketer Yashasvi Jaiswal has been dealing in double hundreds in the ongoing five-match Test series against England. He is also making big in his personal life. The southpaw recently bought an apartment in X BKC for INR 5.4 crore. According to Liases Foras, the 1,100 sq ft flat in wing 3 of the Bandra (East) building was registered on January 7. Yashasvi used to live in a tent in Azad Maidan. He recently scored a double hundred in the third Test against England in Rajkot. He accumulated an unbeaten 214 runs in the second innings, with India winning the match by 434 runs to go 2-1. He faced 236 deliveries and hit 14 fours and 12 sixes.

BAD QUALITY GIFT

England Women's cricketer Danielle Wyatt recently revealed that the bat gifted to her by the former Indian captain Virat Kohli was not up to the mark, and she only used it twice. Kohli had presented the bat to Wyatt during India's tour of England in 2014, months after she had expressed her admiration for him on social media. Wyatt used the bat during the England Women's tour of India in 2018. During a recent question-and-answer session with The Quint, Wyatt confirmed that she didn't use the bat much. "I didn't find the bat Kohli gave me to be very good. I only used it two times," she said. Wyatt added that while Kohli is a great player, her idol growing up was English footballer David Beckham.

MOHAMMED SHAMI OUT OF IPL 2024

Gujarat Titans suffered a big blow as their star seamer Mohammed Shami has been ruled out of IPL 2024 due to an ankle injury. A source from BCCI confirmed the news to PTI and stated that the 33-year-old seamer would travel to the UK for surgery. Shami has been suffering from pain in his left ankle for months. Notably, the right-arm seamer played the 2023 World Cup in pain as he struggled during his run-up. Nonetheless, Shami, who was not in the playing XI for the first few matches, shone with the ball despite the ball and emerged as the tournament's leading wicket-taker with 24 wickets to his name in just seven games. After the World Cup, Shami traveled to London to treat his injury.

COVER STORY

RATING RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN AMONG THE ELITE SPINNERS WITH 500 TEST WICKETS

Ravichandran Ashwin's recent milestone of reaching 500 Test wickets marks a significant moment in the annals of cricketing history. The Indian spin wizard achieved this feat during the ongoing test series against England, further solidifying his place among...

BY CT CONTRIBUTOR

Ravichandran Ashwin's recent milestone of reaching 500 Test wickets marks a significant moment in the annals of cricketing history. The Indian spin wizard achieved this feat during the ongoing test series against England, further solidifying his place among the sport's elite spinners. With a career spanning 98 matches, Ashwin's journey to 500 wickets showcases his remarkable talent, unwavering dedication, and resilience.

In exploring Ashwin's legacy, we delve into the statistical marvels that define his career, comparing his achievements with those of other spin maestros, notably Nathan Lyon. We unravel the complexities of his bowling prowess as we dissect his exceptional numbers, including an average of 23.97, 34 five-wicket hauls, and 8 ten-wicket hauls. Join us as we embark on a journey to dissect the legacy of Ravichandran Ashwin, a journey that transcends numbers and statistics, delving into the heart of what makes him a true master of spin bowling. Firstly, let's examine Ashwin's impressive numbers. With 98 matches under his belt, Ashwin has amassed a staggering 500 wickets at an enviable average of 23.97. This includes an impressive tally of 34 five-wicket hauls and 8 ten-wicket hauls. However, what sets Ashwin apart is his wicket-taking ability and his versatility. While he hasn't claimed a fifer in SENA (South Africa, England, New

Zealand, Australia) conditions, he has dominated in subcontinental venues, particularly in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and the West Indies.

COMPARISONS TO LEGENDS

Drawing comparisons to spin legends such as Muttiah Muralitharan provides additional context to Ravichandran Ashwin's illustrious career. Muralitharan's unparalleled tally of 800 Test wickets, achieved across various conditions, sets a benchmark beyond reach, unlike any other spinner. His sheer dominance and mastery of the craft overshadow any comparison. Muralitharan's remarkable statistics, with an average of 22.72 in Tests, underscore his unmatched effectiveness across different pitches and situations. Despite challenges faced by spinners overseas, Muralitharan's ability to adapt and thrive in diverse conditions remains unmatched, solidifying his status as the Greatest of All Time (GOAT) in spin bowling.

Similarly, Kumble's monumental 619 Test wickets, coupled with his unwavering determination and tactical nous, parallel Ashwin's ability to deliver crucial breakthroughs when the chips are down. Kumble's slightly higher average of 29.65 is balanced by his remarkable performances away from home, where he often led the Indian spin attack admirably. Moreover, Ashwin's tactical acumen and ability to outfox batsmen draw parallels to the legendary Shane Warne, who scalped an astonishing 708 Test wickets with his wizardry. Warne's overseas record, averaging 25.41, solidifies his status as one of the greatest spinners to grace the game.

While each spinner boasts unique strengths, Ashwin's versatility across formats and conditions stands out. His blend of skills embodies the best qualities of these spin luminaries, solidifying his status as a modern-day great. With his 500 Test wickets and counting, Ashwin's legacy in the pantheon of cricketing legends is firmly established, underlining his significance in the annals of the sport.

COMPARISON TO CONTEMPORARIES

Comparing Ashwin's record with other spin maestros highlights his exceptional prowess. Among his contemporaries, Nathan Lyon stands out as a formidable opponent. Lyon, with 127 matches to his name, has taken 517 wickets. One notable aspect of Lyon's career is his ability to secure five-wicket hauls in every cricketing nation except New Zealand, showcasing his adaptability across diverse conditions.

Several intriguing comparisons emerge when we juxtapose Ashwin's and Lyon's performances. Ashwin's superior average of 23.97 compared to Lyon's 30.73 indicates Ashwin's greater effectiveness in bagging wickets at a lower cost. Additionally, Ashwin's commendable tally of ten-wicket hauls (8) underscores his ability to dismantle opposition line-ups single-handedly.

However, Lyon's resilience and consistency must be noticed. Despite playing more matches, Lyon's knack for taking five-wicket hauls across various countries showcases his adaptability and reliability in any cricketing environment. This resilience has been a cornerstone of Lyon's success throughout his career. Moreover, the absence of fifers for Ashwin in SENA conditions may raise questions about his ability to excel in challenging overseas environments. While his dominance in subcontinental pitches is undeniable, critics may argue that true greatness is defined by conquering diverse conditions worldwide. Yet, it's essential to recognize the contextual nuances that shape these statistics. Ashwin's role in the Indian cricket team often involves containing runs and building pressure, contributing to his impressive bowling average. On the other hand, Lyon, as the primary spinner for Australia, may face different expectations and tactical challenges.

Furthermore, the impact of the teams they play for cannot be discounted. Ashwin operates in a team with a formidable pace attack, whereas Lyon often shoulders more significant responsibilities as Australia's frontline spinner. These contextual factors are crucial in shaping their respective records and should be considered when evaluating their performances.

ASHWIN - THE LEGEND

Ravichandran Ashwin's attainment of 500 Test wickets firmly establishes him as one of cricket's premier spinners. His extraordinary accomplishments, complemented by his adaptability and expertise, position him squarely among the sport's elite. Although comparisons with Nathan Lyon underscore distinct strengths and contexts, Ashwin's indelible mark on cricket remains undeniable. His legacy as a spin maestro will resonate for generations as he continues to captivate audiences with his artistry. Ashwin's journey is not just about numbers but a testament to perseverance, skill, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, ensuring his place in the pantheon of cricketing legends. ■

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FEATURE

MIKE PROCTER: SOUTH AFRICA CRICKET GREAT PASSES AT 77

Mike Procter, a fearsome pacer and powerful batter whose cricket career was restricted by an international ban on South Africa because of apartheid has died. He was 77. Cricket South Africa (CSA) said in a statement that it "mourns the passing...

BY STAFF WRITER

Mike Procter, a fearsome pacer and powerful batter whose cricket career was restricted by an international ban on South Africa because of apartheid has died. He was 77. Cricket South Africa (CSA) said in a statement that it "mourns the passing of Mike Procter, one of the game's greatest all-rounders."

CSA president Rihan Richards called Procter "not just a giant on the field but a beacon of hope and inspiration off it," adding that "Procter's career as a fast bowler, capable off-spinner, hard-hitting middle-order batter, and astute captain is etched in the annals of cricket history."

Procter was the first man to coach his country after the post-apartheid return to international cricket for South Africa. He had been considered one of the most gifted players of his generation but was restricted to just seven test appearances — where he took 41 wickets at an average of just 15 — due to South Africa's political isolation.

Instead, he had the chance to showcase his abilities in English county cricket, where his exploits for Gloucestershire saw the club affectionately nicknamed "Proctershire" in his honor.

"Gloucestershire Cricket is devastated to learn of the passing of former player and club legend Mike Procter," a statement from the county read. "Widely regarded as one of the greatest ever to play cricket for Gloucestershire, Procter tragically died on Saturday, 17 February, in hospital in his hometown of Durban, South Africa."

He played 482 matches for the county side, scoring more than 20,000 runs and taking over 1,000 wickets. Overall, he was a part of 401 first-class matches, scoring 21936 runs, with the help of 48 hundreds and 109 fifties. He took 1417 wickets at an average of 19.53.

Mike accumulated 6624 runs and dismissed 344 batters in 271 List A games. His former team-mate David Graveney remembered him.

"Mike was a fantastic cricketer and one of the best all-rounders to play for Gloucestershire," he said.

"He was one of the best cricketers I played with. The phrase 'Proctershire' was very apt for Mike. He was a top contributor to big games. The big players give their best on the biggest platform, and that is what he did."

When the Proteas were welcomed back into the international sporting arena, Procter was appointed the team's head coach, guiding them through the earliest stages of their reintroduction and reaching the semifinals of the 1992 World Cup. He later became chairman of selectors and an International Cricket Council match referee. ■

FEATURE

LIST OF RECORDS BROKEN IN IND vs ENG THIRD TEST IN RAJKOT

India humbled England by 434 runs in the third Test match of the ongoing five-match series. India dominated the scenes in Rajkot and closed things down on Day 4. Centuries from Rohit Sharma and Jadeja helped the hosts manage 445/10 in the first innings...

BY CT CONTRIBUTOR

India humbled England by 434 runs in the third Test match of the ongoing five-match series. India dominated the scenes in Rajkot and closed things down on Day 4. Centuries from Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja helped the hosts manage 445/10 in the first innings. Debutant Sarfaraz Khan shined with a knock of 62. England were flying high with a score of 224/2 at one stage in response, but India despite being a bowler down, forced a collapse as England fell for 319. India gained a 126-run lead.

Yashasvi Jaiswal then slammed a record-breaking double-century in the second innings as India set a target of 557. Shubman Gill played well for his 91. England had no clue with the bat and fell prey to a disciplined Indian bowling. Jadeja was the pick of the Indian bowlers. England folded for 122 in the second innings. England were folded in 39.4 overs.

Here, we bring you the major records broken in this contest.

ROHIT SHARMA BREAKS DHONI'S RECORD

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma hit a sparkling 131 from 196 balls in the first innings. He hit 14 fours and three sixes. With his second six of the inning, Rohit surpassed MS Dhoni in terms of sixes by an Indian player in the longest format. Dhoni smashed 78 sixes in his career. Rohit has 80 sixes and is only behind Virender Sehwag, who has slammed 91 maximums.

3000 TEST RUNS, 7000 FC RUNS, AND 1000 RUNS VERSUS ENGLAND FOR JADDU

Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja slammed a solid 112 in the 1st innings. He bailed India out of trouble by adding a double-century stand alongside Rohit. Jadeja has now gone past 3000 runs for India (3005 at an average of 37.09). Enroute to his century, Jadeja also went past 7000 First-Class runs. As per ESPNcricinfo, Jadeja has raced to 7101 runs at an average of over 45. He owns 13 tons and 37 fifties, including four hundreds for India (50s: 20). Jadeja also went past 1000 runs versus England. He became the 15th Indian player with the landmark versus England, who are the first side against whom the southpaw owns 1000-plus runs.

1500-PLUS RUNS IN RAJKOT FOR JADDU

Jadeja continued his love affair with the SCA ground

in Rajkot in red-ball cricket. As per Cricbuzz, Jadeja featured in his 12th FC match (17 innings) at the SCA in Rajkot. His 112 took him past 1500 (1,566) runs at this venue, averaging 142-plus. Notably, Jadeja registered his sixth hundred here. He also owns four fifties. His best score here is 331.

3rd INDIAN WITH THIS DOUBLE AND PARTNERSHIP RECORD WITH ROHIT

Jadeja is now the third Indian all-rounder after R Ashwin and Kapil Dev to accomplish the Test double of 250 wickets and 3000 runs. Jadeja owns 286 scalps, besides his 3005 runs. Overall, the 35-year-old became the 12th all-rounder to accomplish this massive double in Tests. Jadeja and Rohit added 204 runs for the fourth wicket against England. Rohit and Jadeja became the third Indian pair to clock a double-century stand against England for the fourth wicket. They joined Sourav Ganguly and Sachin Tendulkar (249 in Leeds, 2002) and Vijay Hazare-Vijay Manjrekar (222 in Leeds, 1952).

500 FC SCALPS FOR JADEJA, 13TH TEST FIVE-WICKET HAUL

Jadeja also went past 500 wickets in FC cricket. He came into the contest with 499 scalps. With his seven wickets in the match, Jadeja now owns 506 wickets. For India, he has raced to 287 scalps, picking up seven in this match, including a fifer in the second innings. He registered his 13th five-wicket haul. Jadeja also went past 200 scalps on home soil. He has 206 wickets at 20.66.

2nd INDIAN AFTER ASHWIN WITH THIS RECORD

Jadeja is now the second Indian player with a century and fifer in a match on two-plus occasions. Before this, Jadeja clocked 175* & 5/41 vs Sri Lanka in Mohali, 2022. Ashwin is the only Indian to clock this record on three instances.

2nd LEFT-ARM SPINNER TO CLOCK THIS RECORD IN HOME MATCHES

Jadeja became just the second left-arm spinner to complete 200 Test wickets at home after Rangana Herath, who finished with 278 wickets in this regard at an average of 23.65. Among pacers, Mitchell Starc (217) is the only other left-arm bowler with 200-plus wickets in home Tests.

500 WICKETS FOR THE LEGENDARY RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

Ashwin picked two wickets in this contest. Notably, he didn't feature on Day 3 after taking an emergency leave to attend to his family. Ashwin became the second Indian after Anil Kumble to take 500-plus wickets. He is now the ninth bowler in the history of the sport to take 500 wickets. He is the fifth spinner to script this record as well. Ashwin became the second-fastest bowler to complete 500 Test wickets. While Ashwin took 98 Tests to complete 500 scalps, only Sri Lanka's Muthiah Muralidaran (87) has accomplished the milestone in fewer games.

BEN DUCKETT SHINES WITH A RECORD-

BREAKING 153

England opener Ben Duckett smashed 153 in the first innings. He faced 151 balls and hit 23 fours and three sixes. Duckett now owns the fastest 150 against India. Duckett reached his 150 off 139 balls, the fastest by a visiting batter on Indian soil since 2000. He went past his compatriot Kevin Pietersen, who took 201 balls to reach the mark in 2012 Mumbai. Duckett also became the 3rd-fastest Test centurion versus India in India (88 balls). He also is the 2nd-fastest centurion as an England opener in Test cricket. Duckett also became the first visiting batter to score 100-plus runs in a session in India.

SARFARAZ SCRIPTS THESE RECORDS WITH DUAL FIFTIES ON DEBUT

Sarfaraz was a massive positive for India. He looked composed on his debut and hit 62 and 68* in this match. Sarfaraz became just the fourth Indian to hammer twin 50-plus scores on Test debut. The 26-year-old Sarfaraz came into the match with 3912 runs in FC cricket. He has now raced past 4000 runs (4042). Sarfaraz owns 13 FC fifties

YASHASVI JAISWAL SHATTERS THESE RECORDS WITH A MAJESTIC DOUBLE-TON

Jaiswal hit 214* from 236 balls. On the way to his ton, Jaiswal also raced past 2500 test runs (2706). With his 12 sixes in the second innings, Jaiswal now owns the joint-most sixes in an innings, equalling Wasim Akram. Jaiswal is also the first batter to hit 20 sixes in a bilateral Test series (22). He surpassed Rohit, who hammered 19 maximums in the 2019 home series against South Africa. Jaiswal is the third Indian to convert his first three Test tons into 150-plus scores. He is also the third Indian to slam two double tons in a bilateral Test series. Young Jaiswal is now the first Indian to clobber two Test double-tons against England. Jaiswal owns 545 runs in this series. He has surpassed Sourav Ganguly in terms of most runs by a left-handed Indian player in a bilateral series. Ganguly scored 534 runs versus Pakistan in 2007-08. Jaiswal has clocked the third-most runs by an Indian opener in a bilateral Test series. He is only behind Sunil Gavaskar, who slammed 774 runs in the 1971 away series against West Indies and 732 runs in the 1978-79 home series against WI.

STOKES FEATURED IN HIS 100th TEST

Ben Stokes played his 100th Test match, becoming the 16th Englishman to achieve the mark. Stokes scored 48 and 15 in this match. After 100 games, the southpaw owns 6,307 runs at 36.24. Stokes, who isn't bowling now, has 197 scalps.

BIGGEST WIN FOR INDIA AND SECOND-HEAVIEST DEFEAT FOR ENGLAND

India's 434-run victory is now their biggest in the format in terms of runs. India's previous biggest win was by 372 runs versus New Zealand at the Wankhede in 2021. Meanwhile, England recorded their second-heaviest defeat in the longest format (runs). England's heaviest defeat was by 562 runs versus Australia at The Oval in 1934. ■

FEATURE

BAZBALL IS HERE TO STAY

England's "Bazball" approach isn't going anywhere. Questions have again been raised about the merits of the attacking, front-foot style preferred by coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes in the wake of England's 434-run loss to India....

BY CT CONTRIBUTOR

England's "Bazball" approach isn't going anywhere. Questions have again been raised about the merits of the attacking, front-foot style preferred by coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes in the wake of England's 434-run loss to India in the third test. It was England's largest defeat in runs since 1934. Yet McCullum isn't for changing, with his team still in with a chance of winning the five-match series at 2-1 down. "The positivity and confidence within the environment needs to remain," McCullum said. "If we do that, we give ourselves the best opportunity with the talent we possess to bounce back. That messaging that comes from myself and the skipper will never change regardless of how we're going.

"I don't want our guys to ever doubt themselves, otherwise we go back to where it was beforehand." Before McCullum became coach, England had won one of its previous 17 tests. Since his arrival, England has won 14 of 21 tests — many of those victories coming in breathtaking fashion.

Former England captain Nasser Hussain wrote in the Daily Mail that the team might need to tweak its approach, saying that "Bazball is not attack, attack, attack — occasionally, you must absorb pressure."

"When you start retreating a little bit on what you've done before and what you've said you're trying to achieve, you're literally living and dying every day by your results and that's not what this team is about," McCullum said. "This team is about trying to keep pushing the game forward, to try and entertain and ultimately win. It didn't work this time around but you can only do that by providing an environment where the guys feel safe and feel they can take on the world."

McCullum downplayed concerns about Joe Root, England's star batter, who has yet to reach 30 in this series. Root was out to a reverse ramp in the third test.

"Joe will be fine," McCullum said. "It's a great compliment to be in a funk after three test matches. He just has to keep backing himself and wait for the luck to turn his way.

"The fact he's missed out in three tests, does that surely not just mean that he's closer to getting a big score? It's Joe Root. Crikey. I mean, seriously? The law of averages suggests he'll fill his boots in the next two tests."

Stokes said ahead of the series that he would only play as a batter as he looks to preserve his fitness after knee surgery late last year. However, he has opened the door to resuming bowling competitively for the first time since last summer's Ashes.

McCullum said he might have to intervene. "Ben is clever," McCullum said. "He won't bowl unless he thinks he's legitimately able to bowl. The problem would be if he starts getting into a spell and then he can't get out of the spell.

"If he does get that bit between his teeth, let's see where the danger lies and try and pull him away from it. But it's good that he's actually getting into a state where he thinks he might bowl." ■

FEATURE

ROMARIO SHEPHERD: THE RAPIDLY GROWING WINDIES ALL-ROUNDER

In the dynamic realm of cricket, few journeys are as captivating as that of Romario Shepherd, the Windies' rising all-rounder whose ascent from the ranks of franchise cricket to international prominence has been nothing short of remarkable. Shepherd's recent exploits...

BY CT CONTRIBUTOR

In the dynamic realm of cricket, few journeys are as captivating as that of Romario Shepherd, the Windies' rising all-rounder whose ascent from the ranks of franchise cricket to international prominence has been nothing short of remarkable. Shepherd's recent exploits, including a gritty unbeaten 67* in Australia and stellar all-round performances throughout a three-match T20 series, have firmly entrenched him as a mainstay in the Windies lineup.

However, Shepherd's journey to the upper echelons of international cricket is a testament to his resilience and perseverance. His growth in franchise cricket laid the foundation for his eventual breakthrough on the international stage. Representing various franchises, Shepherd honed his skills and showcased his potential as a dynamic all-rounder capable of turning matches on their head with both bat and ball. His stint with JSK in the recent season further underscored his growing stature in the cricketing world. While his contributions were notable, Shepherd found himself in and out of the playing XI, a testament to the fierce competition in franchise cricket. However, during these moments of

adversity, Shepherd's character shone through, demonstrating his ability to bounce back stronger and seize the opportunities presented to him.

As Shepherd continues to evolve as a cricketer, his journey serves as an inspiration to aspiring talents across the globe. From the highs and lows of franchise cricket to the thrill of representing his nation on the international stage, Romario Shepherd's story is a testament to the power of perseverance, determination, and unwavering self-belief.

WEST INDIES IN A MESS

Amidst the tumultuous landscape of Windies cricket, characterized by a disappointing string of failures in significant tournaments, Romario Shepherd's emergence as a beacon of hope symbolizes a pivotal moment in the team's rebuilding phase. The Windies, once synonymous with dominance in cricketing arenas, faced a stark reality as they grappled with the repercussions of consecutive World Cup (T20 and ODI) failures. The inability to secure berths in these prestigious tournaments tarnished the team's reputation and highlighted systemic issues plaguing Windies cricket. Within this backdrop of uncertainty and introspection, Shepherd's rise to prominence is a glimmer of hope for a team in dire need of rejuvenation. As the Windies cricket fraternity navigates through a transition period marked by constant friction between players and management, Shepherd's emergence as one of the elites underscores his significance in the team's revival efforts. Tasked with shouldering significant responsibilities in the middle order, Shepherd represents the promise of a new era—a beacon of stability amidst the chaos.

Indeed, the Windies find themselves at a crossroads, grappling with the challenges of rebuilding a team marred by inconsistency and discord. However, Romario Shepherd is a player whose unwavering commitment and stellar performances offer a glimmer of hope for a brighter future. As the Windies embark on their journey towards redemption, Shepherd's emergence as a critical figure instills optimism and renewed vigor in a team poised for resurgence.

SHEPHERD'S JOURNEY

Shepherd's journey to prominence is marked by impressive statistics across formats, reflecting his prowess with both bat and ball. In ODIs, he has showcased his ability to contribute crucial runs with a batting average of 24.00, including a half-century, while chipping in with wickets at critical junctures. Similarly, in T20Is, Shepherd's explosive batting style, coupled with a strike rate of 153.62, makes him a valuable asset in the Windies' quest for success.

Furthermore, Shepherd's versatility extends to the longer formats, as evident from his performances in first-class and List-A cricket. With a batting average of 23.14 in first-class cricket and 31.79 in List A matches, Shepherd has proven his mettle as a dependable middle-order batsman. Additionally, his ability to contribute with the ball, particularly in first-class cricket, where he boasts a bowling average of 23.72, adds depth to his all-around capabilities. Shepherd's inclusion in the Mumbai Indians (MI) franchise during the 2024 auction is a testament to his growing reputation in the cricketing world. The opportunity to showcase his talent in the highly competitive Indian Premier League (IPL) platform will undoubtedly aid in his development as a cricketer, further solidifying his status as a rising star.

However, Shepherd's impact transcends mere statistics. His fearless approach to the game and calm demeanor under pressure set him apart as a player capable of delivering when it matters most. Whether providing crucial breakthroughs with the ball or unleashing powerful strokes with the bat, Shepherd's presence on the field exudes confidence and determination.

As the Windies cricket team navigates through a transition period, Romario Shepherd symbolizes hope and promise for the future. With his all-round abilities and unwavering commitment to excellence, Shepherd is well on his way to etching his name among the cricketing greats, both for the West Indies and on the global stage. As fans eagerly anticipate his future exploits, one thing is sure – Romario Shepherd's journey is just beginning, and the cricketing world is watching with bated breath. ■

SOCIAL BUZZ

facebook

Shikhar Dhawan

Ruling the roads - Shikhar Dhawan

Mohammad Shami

Feeling blessed after my visit to the revered Kaliyar Sharif Dargah - Mohammad Shami

Hardik Pandya

Little training buddy - Hardik Pandya

instagram

@dhanashree9

First time got the opportunity to get my family together

davidwarner31

A cool moment, sharing of the breath during a Hongi. Love being able to travel and share in other cultures.

@royalnavghan

Special win at home ground

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5 YEARS-OLD KID'S PERFECT SHOT COLLECTION

TOP 5 BIZARRE UMPIRING INCIDENTS IN CRICKET

MOST HUNDREDS BY ACTIVE PLAYERS

7 UNBELIEVABLE CATCHES BY WICKET KEEPER EVER

TOP 7 SCOOP SHOTS OF ALL TIME

5 QUICKEST DOUBLE HUNDRED IN ODIS

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@MichaelVaughan

"Love an angry Jonny B"

@bhogleharsha

"This is as sensational a debut as you can imagine from Akash Deep"

@cricketaakash

"Yashasvi may not have won a single POTM thus far...but he will walk away with the Player of the Series award"

@sachin_rt

"Cricket & Kashmir:
A MATCH in HEAVEN"

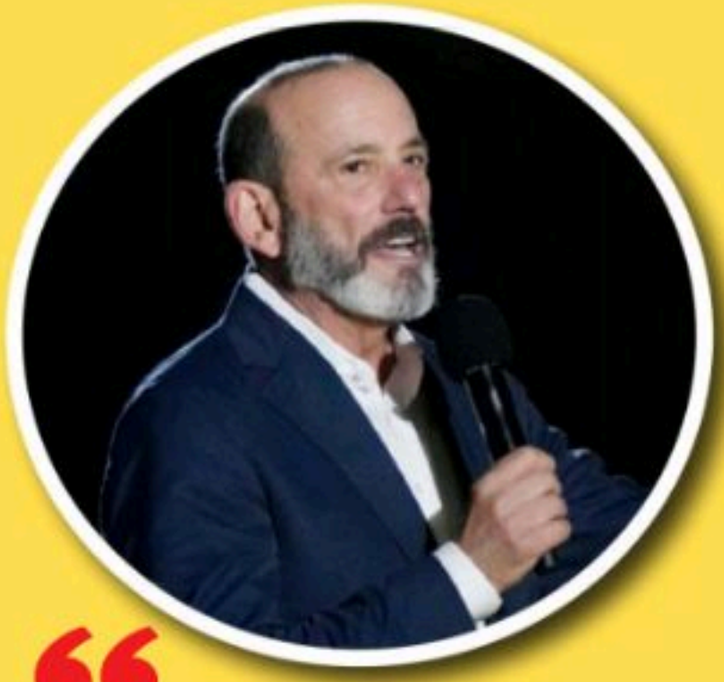
@YUVSTRONG12

"Getting 500 scalps in your test career is no small feat! This is an amazing achievement, well done @ashwinravi99"

@IrfanPathan

"Debuting as a fast bowler on Indian pitches is never easy, but Akash Deep is certainly making a mark straight away"

TOP STORIES



"I think the eyes of the world are on Inter Miami, and I'm hoping that they're able to deliver"

- MLS Commissioner Don Garber on Lionel Messi's team

"I think the credit for that goal goes to the whole team, for what they did in the 90 minutes"

- Wenderson Galeno on scoring against Arsenal in Champions Trophy

PLAN TO END CITY AND LIVERPOOL DOMINANCE

Invoking the famous words of Alex Ferguson, British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe set out his ambition to knock local rivals Manchester City and Liverpool "off their perch" within three years after becoming a co-owner of Manchester United. Ratcliffe completed his purchase of a minority stake in United, with an initial injection of $1.5 billion, meaning he owns approximately 27.7% of the iconic club — with the promise of further investment of $100 million by the end of the year. Ratcliffe, 71, now partly owns a club he has supported since the age of 6 but has been in the shadow of City and Liverpool over the past decade since the retirement of Ferguson in 2013.

MENTOR TO SOUTH KOREA TEAMMATE

South Korea captain Son Heung-min has vowed to be a mentor to Lee Kang-in after being involved in a dispute with his international teammate during the Asian Cup. Son and Lee reportedly had a confrontation during a dinner two weeks before South Korea's loss to Jordan in the semifinals. Son returned from the incident with an injured finger, which he still has to strap. In a lengthy post on Instagram, the Tottenham forward apologized for his role in the incident and called on the national team's fans to forgive Lee. Son shared a photo of himself with Lee alongside the Instagram post. Jurgen Klinsmann has since been fired as South Korea's coach.

REAL MADRID IS IN GOOD SHAPE FINANCIALLY

Signing Kylian Mbappé likely would not be a problem for Real Madrid financially, as it remains the Spanish club with the highest spending limit at 727 million euros ($786 million). The Spanish league said that Barcelona's financial struggles continue, with its cap being reduced to 204 million euros ($220 million). The Catalan club could be in a delicate situation going into the next transfer window. Atletico Madrid has the second-highest cap at 303 million euros ($327 million). Each Spanish league club has a different spending limit based on revenues, costs and debts. It is proportional to roughly 70% of a club's revenues. The limits denote the maximum amount each club can spend on players, coaches, youth systems and other areas. Clubs that are overspending need to find ways to either reduce costs or attract new investment. Madrid has a much brighter outlook, with enough cap space to add Mbappé and possibly others.

TUCHEL TO LEAVE BAYERN MUNICH

Thomas Tuchel is leaving Bayern Munich and taking the fall for a disappointing season. The players have been warned, too. Bayern announced that Tuchel would leave the club at the end of the season after three straight losses that raised the prospect of the club's first campaign without a trophy in 12 years. The announcement was accompanied by a pledge from chief executive Jan-Christian Dreesen to "hold the team accountable" for its performances on the field for the rest of the season. With an eight-point deficit in the Bundesliga and Champions League hopes hanging by a thread, it seemed like a warning to players not to ease off and wait for a new coach.

GREGG BERHALTER EARNED $2.29 MILLION

U.S. men's coach Gregg Berhalter earned $2,291,136 in 2022, including $900,000 in bonuses for the Americans' qualifying for the World Cup and reaching the second round. Berhalter had a base salary of $1,391,136, according to the U.S. Soccer Federation's tax filing for 2022, posted online Wednesday. Berhalter's contract expired at the end of 2022, and he was rehired the following June after being cleared by a law firm of not withholding information when initially hired by the USSF. The probe was sparked by the Reyna family informing the USSF of a three-decade-old domestic violence allegation involving Berhalter and the woman who later became his wife.

FEATURE

HIDEKI MATSUYAMA: THE MOST PROLIFIC PGA TOUR WINNER IN ASIA

The conversation began seven years ago when Japanese star Hideki Matsuyama won his fourth PGA Tour title to pass Shigeki Maruyama, his mentor. Maruyama told him the ultimate mark was nine tour wins, a record for most by an Asian-born player...

BY STAFF WRITER

The conversation began seven years ago when Japanese star Hideki Matsuyama won his fourth PGA Tour title to pass Shigeki Maruyama, his mentor. Maruyama told him the ultimate mark was nine tour wins, a record for most by an Asian-born player. Matsuyama had little reason to believe that would come at Riviera.

Six shots behind to start the final round of the Genesis Invitational, Matsuyama delivered a record performance — 9-under 62, the lowest closing round by a winner at Riviera — to achieve the record that really mattered.

He now has nine PGA Tour wins, one better than K.J. Choi of South Korea.

"Reaching nine wins was one of my big goals, passing K.J. Choi," Matsuyama said after his three-shot victory. "After my eighth win, I've been struggling with my back injury. There were a lot of times where I felt I was never going to win again. I struggled reaching to top 10, but I'm really happy that I was able to win today."

This was an exquisite performance, second only to his 61 in the final round at Firestone in 2017 on a day no one else shot lower than 65.

Matsuyama was part of a five-way tie for the lead on the back nine until he hit a beautiful fade with a 6-iron from 187 yards into a breeze on the tough 15th hole that carried the bunker and rolled out to 8 inches for a tap-in birdie.

"Perfect shot," he said. On the par-3 16th, he dangled the club after his tee shot because it was 5 yards right of where he had been aiming, only to see it

roll to 6 inches from the cup for another birdie. He added a third straight birdie with a chip down the slope on the par-5 17th to just over 3 feet.

Matsuyama lightly pumped his fist — a rare show of emotion for him — when his 4-foot par putt with a sharp right-to-left break dropped in for a 62.

Doug Tewell shot 63 in the final round to win in 1986, the previous record.

The only downer for Matsuyama was not being able to pose with Tiger Woods, the tournament host who had to withdraw on Friday with a bad case of the flu.

"To win in this tournament was one of my goals ever since I became pro," Matsuyama said. "After Tiger became the host, that goal became a lot bigger. A little disappointed that I wasn't able to take a picture with Tiger today."

Matsuyama finished at 17-under 267 for a three-shot victory over Will Zalatoris (69) and Luke List (68). Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele, best friends playing in the final group, faded in the middle of the back nine and tied for fourth.

"Once I saw Hideki finishing at 17 under, it was a bit of a deflater, I'm sure for the rest of the field," Schauffele said. "But hats off to him. It's incredible. He's done it a few times now, shooting lights out on Sunday."

It was the third time Matsuyama shot 63 or lower on Sunday to win, most recently at the Sony Open two years ago. Maruyama sent him a text that day in Hawaii, reminding him of their talk about breaking Choi's record. Matsuyama said winning never entered his mind when he arrived to the course Sunday.

Cantlay had a two-shot lead and had not taken too many wrong steps. But he was feeling a little ill, and the golf was a struggle. Cantlay hit only four fairways and nine greens. He missed a 12-foot birdie putt on the easy opening par 5 and then didn't have another look at birdie until the sixth hole. He made a birdie putt from 50 feet on the 18th for a 72. Cantlay played with Schauffele, who struggled just as much. Schauffele got back in the mix with a tough birdie on the par-4 10th and holing a bunker shot for eagle on the par-5 11th. He bogeyed the next three holes and and rallied at the end for a 70.

List set the early pace. Zalatoris took the lead in the middle of the back nine. At one point there was a five-way tie for the lead heading to the tough stretch on the back nine at Riviera. And then Matsuyama took over with three straight birdies.

"The second shot on 15 was probably the best shot I had," he said through his interpreter.

Matsuyama had struggled the last two years, starting with a neck and back injury at Bay Hill in March 2022. He had only six top 10s worldwide during that stretch and fell out of the top 50 in the world.

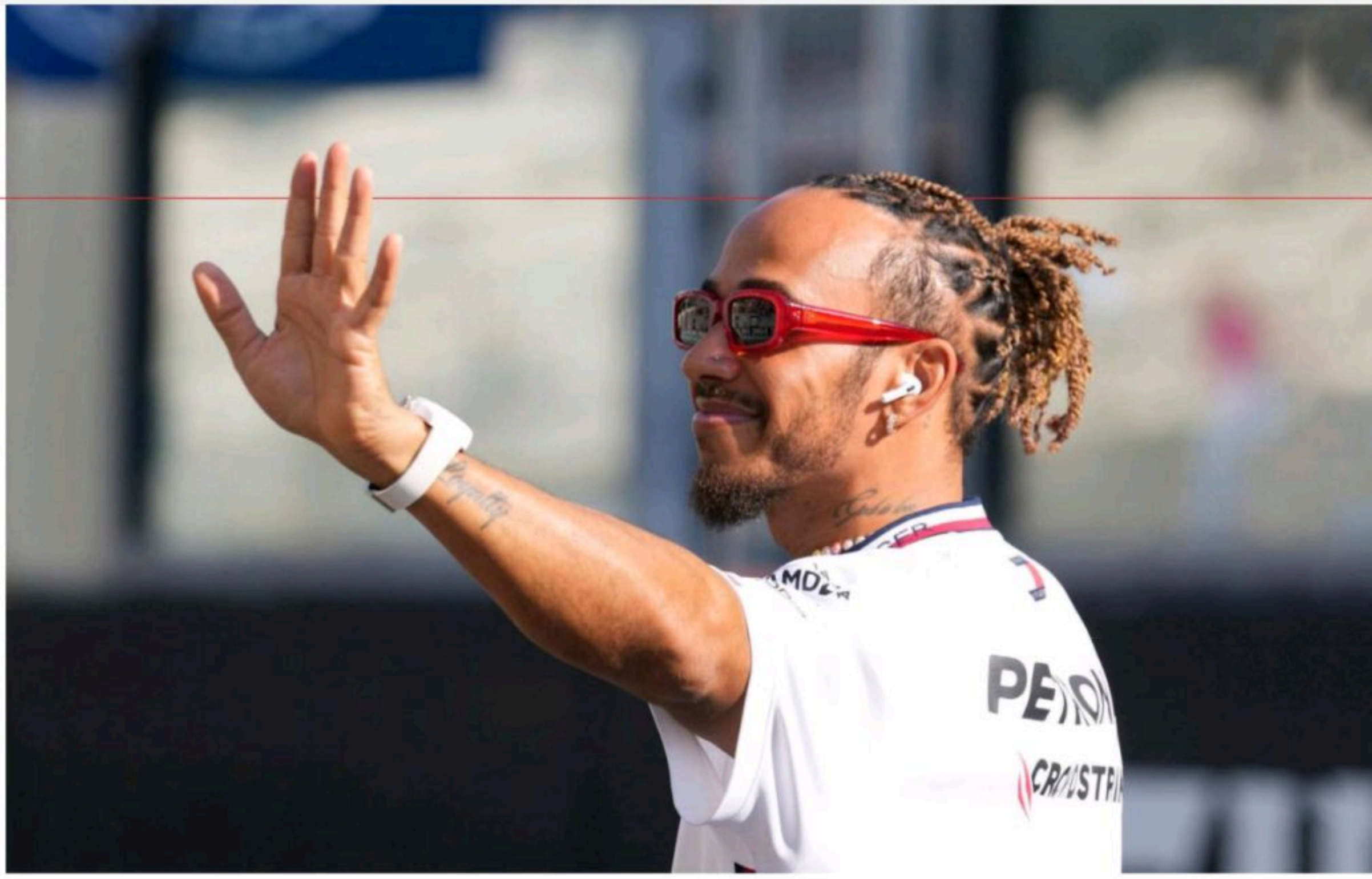
"Ever since that injury, I was worried every week something bad might happen," Matsuyama said. "This week I had no issue. I played without any worries. That really helped."

The win was worth $4 million from the $20 million purse and moves him to No. 20 in the world with the entire major season ahead of him. Matsuyama now has 18 wins worldwide, eight on the Japan Golf Tour and the unofficial Hero World Challenge, also hosted by Woods. At least he has a picture from that day. ■

FEATURE

LAST HURRAH OF LEWIS HAMILTON AT MERCEDES

Seven-time Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton said Wednesday it feels "surreal" to be entering his last season with Mercedes before joining Ferrari for 2025. Speaking as Mercedes unveiled its 2024 car at Silverstone, home of the British Grand Prix, Hamilton...



BY STAFF WRITER

Seven-time Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton said Wednesday it feels "surreal" to be entering his last season with Mercedes before joining Ferrari for 2025. Speaking as Mercedes unveiled its 2024 car at Silverstone, home of the British Grand Prix, Hamilton said it has been a privilege to work with the team.

Hamilton has driven for Mercedes since 2013, winning six of his seven titles with the team, but is leaving at the end of the season to join Ferrari. The move has shaken up F1 and surprised Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff.

"It has obviously been emotional," Hamilton said. "It's very surreal to be here, given I came here in 2013, so 11 years with the team, starting my 12th, and it is such a privilege to work with a group of people where you see the work they're doing over the winter."

Mercedes was due to do a brief "shakedown" run at Silverstone on Wednesday before heading to Bahrain for three days of pre-season testing next week. The focus will be on "getting the team back to where we once were," Hamilton said. "I think we've had this difficult couple of years, which I think has been really grounding for us. It's helped us regroup."

Wolff said the 2024 Mercedes car, the W15, represents "a complete relaunch" of the design. The livery brings back a flash of Mercedes' traditional silver on the nose after last year's mostly-black look.

"It's very different, not only on the aerodynamic surfaces, but mainly underneath," Wolff said. "There are so many mechanical changes that we have done which we hope are going to translate into more performance, more predictability, a car that the drivers can really push, and we should be seeing next week in Bahrain."

When the rules changed for 2022 to reintroduce ground-effect aerodynamics, Mercedes struggled to adapt. The team did not win a race last season as Red Bull and its driver Max Verstappen dominated all year.

"We know it's difficult, we know it's a big mountain to climb because, if a team's far ahead like the Red Bull was last year, that's not easy," Wolff said.

"We have a superb driver combination, hopefully a fast car, the best people in the factory that are giving it all to succeed, I think there's some very good ingredients to be back in the front again."

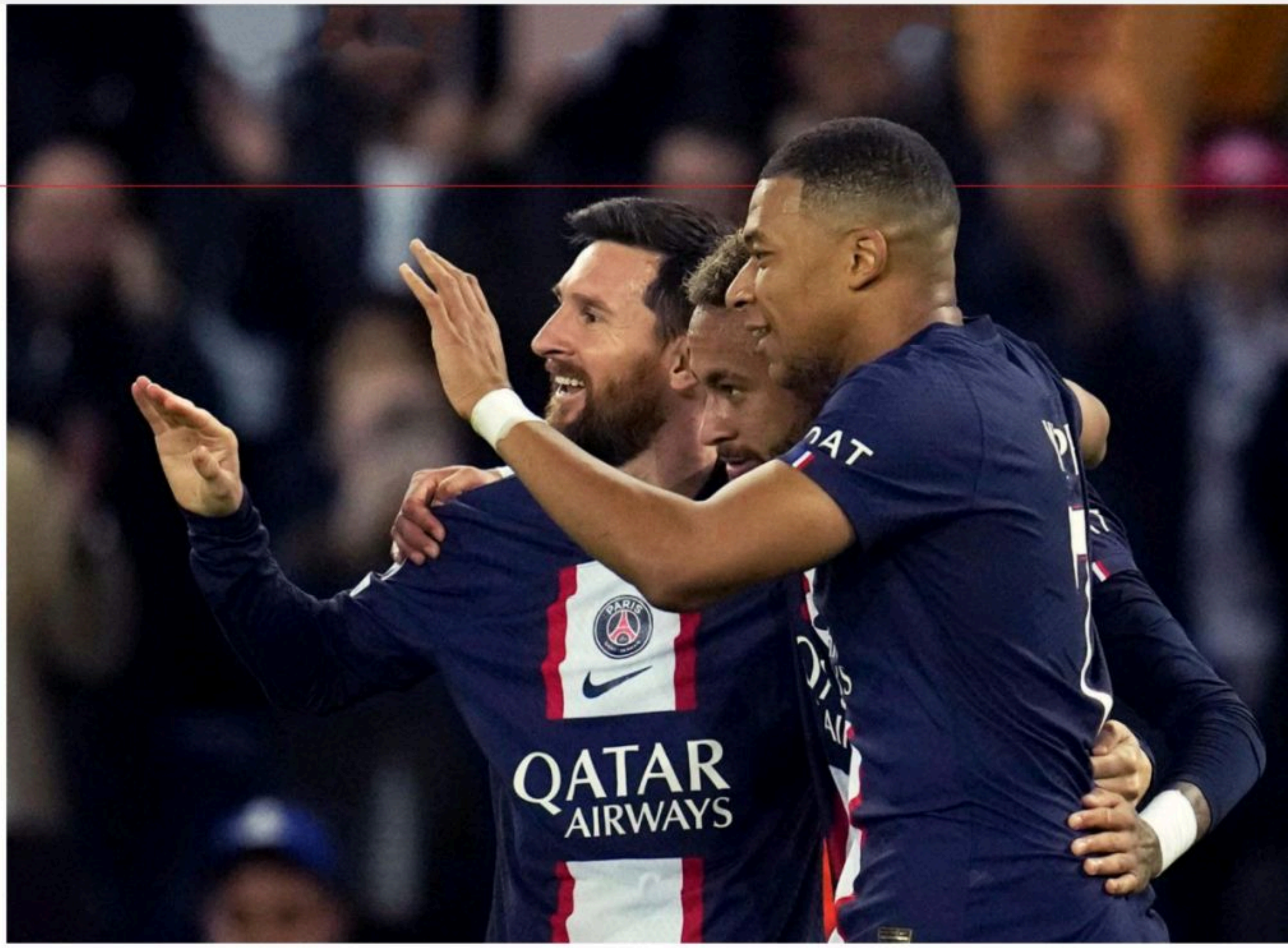
Ferrari team principal Fred Vasseur said Tuesday that Hamilton's arrival would be a "huge opportunity" for the Italian team, which has not had one of its drivers win the world title since Kimi Raikkonen beat Hamilton in 2007.

Hamilton will team up with Charles Leclerc at Ferrari in 2025, leaving Leclerc's current teammate Carlos Sainz Jr. to seek out a new team for next year. ■

FEATURE

THE FUTURE LOOKS MUCH BRIGHTER FOR MBAPPÉ THAN PSG

The future looks much brighter for Kylian Mbappé than it does for Paris Saint-Germain. With Mbappé leaving PSG at the end of the season, following former star teammates Neymar and Lionel Messi out of the door, the Qatari-owned club's project to dominate...



BY STAFF WRITER

The future looks much brighter for Kylian Mbappé than it does for Paris Saint-Germain. With Mbappé leaving PSG at the end of the season, following former star teammates Neymar and Lionel Messi out of the door, the Qatari-owned club's project to dominate European soccer has taken another severe blow. For while Mbappé will have Europe's biggest clubs chasing him — Real Madrid seems in pole position — PSG faces uncertainty. The cash-rich club's next steps will be heavily scrutinized.

Who will replace the 25-year-old Mbappé? How will PSG cope without Mbappé given that his goals have helped paper over so many cracks? How does coach Luis Enrique prepare for the rest of this season and the next? An exasperated Enrique tried his best not to answer at his pre-match news conference on Friday, on the eve of his team's French league game at Nantes. He flatly delivered one-line responses such as "I won't comment until the parties concerned have commented" and "No player is bigger than the club." When a reporter tried one last time in Spanish, he told her: "I don't have any information to give you on this subject."

Mbappe's exit is also not good news for the French league as it negotiates the next set of TV rights with broadcasters up until 2029. Mbappé's departure will close the chapter on a local boy who ended up at his hometown club and helped repair its battered image. Mbappé was 12 years old, playing for his local club AS Bondy in the Paris suburbs, when Qatari owners QSI bought PSG in June 2011. The club was reeling from years of soccer violence, resulting in the death of two PSG fans in the streets around Parc des Princes stadium, and results on the field were poor with no league title won since 1994.

After QSI's arrival, the stadium's hostile atmosphere gave way to cushioned seats and major celebrities like Jay-Z, Michael Jordan and Beyoncé. Nine more league titles followed, giving PSG a national record of 11.

Mbappé joined in 2017 along with Neymar for a combined 402 million euros ($433 million). They helped PSG become the biggest club in France.

But QSI really craved a Champions League trophy and a raft of big-name players — including Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Thiago Silva and Angel Di Maria — plus a carousel of coaching changes have not delivered it. The club's motto "Dream Bigger" was splashed on the team bus but PSG reached only one final, losing 1-0 to Bayern Munich in the pandemic-shortened 2020 edition.

√दुआओं में याद रखना_

So if they couldn't win the competition with all these stars over the years, what can PSG do without any now? Will Qatar's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, lose patience and pull the plug on the whole project? Will the disgruntled fans, already frustrated at leaving Parc des Princes in the future, have enough of the current leadership and turn on club president Nasser al-Khelaifi? For the time being, matters remain under control and PSG has a Plan "B" in place.

Perhaps anticipating Mbappé's departure, PSG already started shifting focus somewhat by bringing in more French players like Randal Kolo Muani, Ousmane Dembélé and Bradley Barcola, while fast-tracking academy talents like 17-year-old Warren Zaïre-Emery. Mbappé's younger brother, 17-year-old Ethan, has also broken into the squad. This represents a considerable shift from chasing star names, and gives local youth players more opportunities than before, but performances may get worse.

Mbappé's goals — 41 last season, 31 already this campaign, a club-record 243 overall — have masked glaring deficiencies in midfield and defense. So many times, he has bailed his teammates out. A look at the statistics of the other forwards does not suggest the same will happen.

Kolo Muani's season-best tally is 15 league goals, Dembélé's is 12 and the 21-year-old Barcola is unproven. Striker Goncalo Ramos managed 19 goals

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समय पत्रिका,साधना पथ,गृहलक्ष्मी,उदय इंडिया,निरोगधाम,मॉडर्न खेती ,इंडिया टुडे,देवपुत्र,क्रिकेट टुडे,गृहशोभा,अनोखी हिन्दुस्तान,मुक्ता,सरिता,चंपक,प्रतियोगिता दर्पण,सक्सेस मिरर,सामान्य ज्ञान दर्पण,फार्म एवं फूड,मनोहर कहानियां,सत्यकथा,सरस सलिल,स्वतंत्र वार्ता लाजवाब,आउटलुक,सच्ची शिक्षा,वनिता,मायापुरी,इंडिया हेल्थ,रूपायन उजाला,ऋषि प्रसाद,जोश रोजगार समाचार,जोश करेंट अफेयर्स,जोश सामान्य ज्ञान,जोश बैंकिंग और एसएससी,इंडिया बुक ऑफ रिकॉर्ड्स,राजस्थान रोजगार संदेश,राजस्थान सूजस,सखी जागरण,अहा! जिंदगी,बाल भास्कर,योजना,कुरूक्षेत्र,हिन्दुस्तान जॉब्स

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for Benfica in Portugal last season but he is a backup forward. Once again, PSG will likely have to import a leading striker to stay competitive.

Here's a look at some of PSG's possible targets:

VICTOR OSIMHEN, NAPOLI

The Nigeria striker is the same age as Mbappé and appears the best option. Osimhen is excellent with his back to goal, strong in the air, quick and a good finisher. His 26 league goals helped Napoli win the Serie A title last season. He has a contract until 2026 and knows the French league, playing one season for Lille before joining Napoli in 2020.

MOHAMED SALAH, LIVERPOOL

The livewire Egypt forward is under contract until 2025 and would be 32 if he joins next season. He likely does not have many prime years left but his scoring and passing remain sharp. He has passed the 200-goal mark for Liverpool, but Juergen Klopp's departure at the end of the season could coincide with his own. However, if Salah goes it could be to the Saudi Arabian league rather than PSG.

MARCUS RASHFORD, MANCHESTER UNITED

The 26-year-old England forward might want to leave Old Trafford after being overlooked by coach Erik ten Haag. Rashford's form has dipped with only five goals in 29 games compared to a career-best 30 in 59 last season. A move to PSG could prove good for both Rashford and United. ■

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